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THE LABORATORY IN THE CRIMINAL COURT

Every city should have an inebriate ward connected with its police stations, where prisoners who collapse could have the prompt attention of a physician—men as well as women.

Leaving the more degraded classes, consider the girl fugitive from home and parents, the one started on a wayward course, or the female charged with a first offense of shop-lifting or with having stolen from her employer. These should be and are usually taken to places of detention by officers in plain clothes. In my own jurisdiction, they are conveyed to a house of detention, and there placed in charge of a matron, who not only searches the prisoners, but affords them baths, provides them with night clothes, clean beds and linens and spreads, and furnishes them proper literature and instruction.

The conveyance attached to these institutions should have no lettering or insignia of police attachment, so that when a woman or girl is transported therein, it will be no unusual attraction for the curious, and thereby avoid humiliation for the unfortunate.

These prisoners should be classified from the time of arrest. Girls should be returned to their homes or friends without having to appear in court, if possible. First criminal offenders should be taken to court without knowledge of the sight-seeing public. Many should be given an opportunity to start life anew.

In department stores, where most of the shop-lifting or stealing of small articles is carried on, the disposition to arrest, except in flagrant cases, does not exist. Prisoners arrested by detectives are usually escorted into private places, and photographed and admonished. There are those known to have such weaknesses, whose relatives or friends make good for the losses sustained through their acts.

RICHARD SYLVESTER.

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The fundamental purpose of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology is becoming actual in our psychopathic laboratories. From its inception, the Institute has emphasized the laboratory ideal for the criminal courts and prisons. We are beginning to see the fruit of our urging, and it is satisfying. The laboratory in the Municipal Court of Boston, directed by Dr. Victor Anderson, and that in the parent court of Chicago, opened on last May first, with Dr. William Hickson as director: these are objects toward which we have set our faces.

One of the first committees appointed by the Institute was Committee A, charged with the duty to devise a system for recording data

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concerning criminals. Under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Olson of the Municipal Court of Chicago, this committee made two reports which were published by the Institute, and which attracted national attention. In those reports it was urged that municipalities and counties should establish laboratories for the service of their criminal courts. It has struck home in Boston and in Chicago. In the state of New York, too, the movement is on the way. Mr. Louis Gibbs of New York city, a year ago introduced in the legislature of the state a bill providing for the establishment of a similar laboratory in every first class city of the state. The measure attracted favorable attention, and no doubt it will ultimately carry.

It is a matter for regret that a paper recently read in Columbus, Ohio, by Dr. Hickson of the Chicago laboratory, came to our hand too late for insertion in this issue of the JOURNAL. Dr. Hickson there reported that since May first he and his assistants had examined 245 boys who were sent to him from the Boy's Court. They were youths who had not been released on bail and ranged in age from 17 to 21 years. Of these only 7.34 per cent were reported as of normal intelligence. The others were morons, and many of the majority suffered from some specific moral defect.

In making the above calculations, Dr. Hickson is assured he has erred, if at all, on the side of leniency. All doubtful answers, when the Binet-Simon tests were being applied, were marked plus. The percentage of normal cases, he thinks, will fall below that indicated above when the data obtained from examination of youths who have been admitted to bail shall have been taken into account.

It is appropriate to compare the ages at which the different groups make their way into the criminal courts. The morons, on the average, stand before the bar 2.23 years earlier than normal cases, and the borderland group precede normal youths by 0.84 year.

Further confirmation of the general conclusion that we find in this paper may be found in what we may be allowed to call the "world test." Few delinquent youths can hold a job for more than a limited number of days or weeks. Those who hold on longer are usually inefficient and are the first to be laid off when the employer adopts a policy of retrenchment. The results of this world test, as an index of mental quality, cannot be expressed in quantitative terms. It is a valid test for all that. If a young man can and will fix his attention upon his work through thick and thin until he establishes himself, even as a reliable day laborer, he has shown a degree of self control that we cannot associate with mental deficiency of a serious nature. In the latest report of the managers of the New York reformatories is a study of one hundred successive

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cases of failure on parole. The large outstanding fact in that investigation is that the young man who fails to meet the conditions of parole when he has been sent out from Elmira and Napanoch, fails because he will not hold his job. It is not, says Dr. Christian, the investigator, that the employers do not go half way, but that the young men themselves are shiftless. Dr. Hickson seems to approve such confirmation as this. Indeed he briefly refers, in his paper, to similar reports that he has received from social workers.

The economic side of this whole question is important, and manufacturing and commercial establishments are, with good sense, casting about for reliable means by which morons may be sifted out from the group of applicants for situations in their houses.

It is altogether probable that much of what appears as morosity at the chronological age of 20 is traceable to inexcusable social neglect. We allow unemployed youths between the ages of 14 and 16 to remain out of school and to lead lives of idleness in the street. This we permit, even while the law provides that they must be in school during these years, unless they are employed. But there is no authority to place these youths in the parental school where a place is provided for younger habitual truants. We have tied our own hands as far as these children are concerned, and give them an opportunity in their formative years to develop those mental habits or dispositions that put them in a position analogous to that of the constitutionally inferior.

If this data or anything approximating to it is confirmed we have found subject matter for an intellectual giant's constructive thought. On the one hand crime, and on the other education in America cost equally. How can we most effectively disturb this vicious balance in the right direction? We are finding the way. We must ultimately be able to discover the defective by specific tests before it is too late. We must try those who are suspected of constitutional deficiency in specially contrived environments for a long period if necessary. When they are once discovered beyond the shadow of doubt, by a strong hand we must eliminate them by life-long segregation from the opportunity to do wrong to their neighbors.

ROBERT H. GAULT.